United Nations A/61/290

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 August 2006

Original: English

Sixty-first session
Item 116 of the provisional agenda*
Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007

Information and communication technology security, business continuity and disaster recovery

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 59/276, section XI, paragraph 47, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its sixtieth session the result of the technical study on information and communication technology security, business continuity and disaster recovery, with detailed costing and a timetable. In his previous note (A/60/677), the Secretary-General advised that the result of the study indicated the possibility of meeting operational objectives by building upon the existing information and communication technology infrastructure of the Secretariat. The study recognized that analysis of possible "value-engineering" alternatives to identify potential cost-saving measures would be required. The alternatives include such approaches as consolidation, outsourcing and offshoring of the information and communication technology operations.

2. The full potential of the financial opportunities of the above approaches was not clear at the time of the preparation of the study and it was recognized that further analysis of possible alternatives would be required. Such analysis was necessary to identify potential cost-saving measures and to take into account the ongoing security projects being undertaken by the Department of Safety and Security. Since the previous note of the Secretary-General was submitted to the General Assembly, the need for further examination of approaches has been underscored by recent events related to the emerging reform agenda which will have a significant impact on the business continuity and disaster recovery strategy. Therefore, the Secretary-General recommends that the current course of preparation of a technical study with detailed costing and a timetable be re-examined and coordinated with proposals under preparation for the resumed part of the sixty-first session when a comprehensive proposal on investing in information and communications technology will be submitted.

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06-47929 (E) 080906

3. In the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Investing in the United Nations" (A/60/846/Add.1), a Secretariat-wide upgrading of information and communication technology systems was proposed. In part II of its resolution 60/283, the General Assembly endorsed the replacement of the Integrated Management Information System with a next-generation enterprise resource planning system or other comparable system. Further, the General Assembly requested that in submitting his comprehensive report referred to in paragraphs 17 and 18 of his report, the Secretary-General include in his review an indication of any substantive improvements to the information and communication technology systems that may be required, including the systems at offices away from Headquarters, the regional commissions and peacekeeping operations. The replacement of the Integrated Management Information System and the review of current information and communication technology systems represent an exceptional opportunity to integrate business continuity and disaster recovery capability to prospective mission critical systems such as enterprise resource planning and related organizational systems.

4. The synchronization of proposals is also advantageous for leveraging the in-depth analysis and study required of both proposals. In its thirty-fourth report (A/60/7/Add.33), the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions urged the Secretariat to actively seek out lessons learned, from entities both inside and outside the United Nations system, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. A review of lessons learned for business continuity and disaster recovery will be conducted in conjunction with a United Nations system-wide survey of enterprise resource planning and mission-critical systems.

5. The Secretary-General remains committed to ensuring that a global operational framework for information and communication technology security, business continuity and disaster recovery is implemented and adequately protects investment in major organizational systems, services and data. A dedicated examination of approaches and efforts to study costing alternatives to include potential consolidations, outsourcing, offshoring and financial considerations linked to infrastructure improvements and enterprise resource planning implementation will continue concurrently with the preparation of the comprehensive report to be submitted to the General Assembly at the resumed part of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, thereby reflecting a cohesive strategy.

6. **The General Assembly may wish to take note of the course of action herein presented.**